

EU Parliament Votes for New Law on Trade Secrets

On 14 April, the European Parliament voted by a large majority (503 for, 131 against) to approve new EU legislation on “Trade Secrets”. The new law creates excessive rights to secrecy for businesses: it is a direct threat to the work of journalists and their sources, whistleblowers, employees' freedom of expression, and rights to access public interest information (on medicines, pesticides, car emissions, etc.).

Only the left groups (GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA) voted against the text, as well as most EFDD (UKIP and 5 stars) and a few MEPs from the extreme-right (EFN); The social-democrats (S&D), the liberals (ALDE), the Conservatives (EPP, ECR) and the French members of the extreme-right (EFN) voted overwhelmingly in favour of the text. Labour MEPs voted in favour.

Is there a link between trade secrets protection and the TTIP negotiations?

Yes and no. Formally this Directive and the TTIP negotiations are two separate processes. However, it is striking to see that almost exactly the same text is going through Congress now and that this will lead to a de facto harmonisation of the legislation on trade secrets protection in the EU and in the US. The regulatory cooperation mechanism foreseen in TTIP will make changing this legislation very difficult.

Prior to the vote, European campaign organisations had signed a document calling on MEP to reject the new Directive. See [the text](#) here.